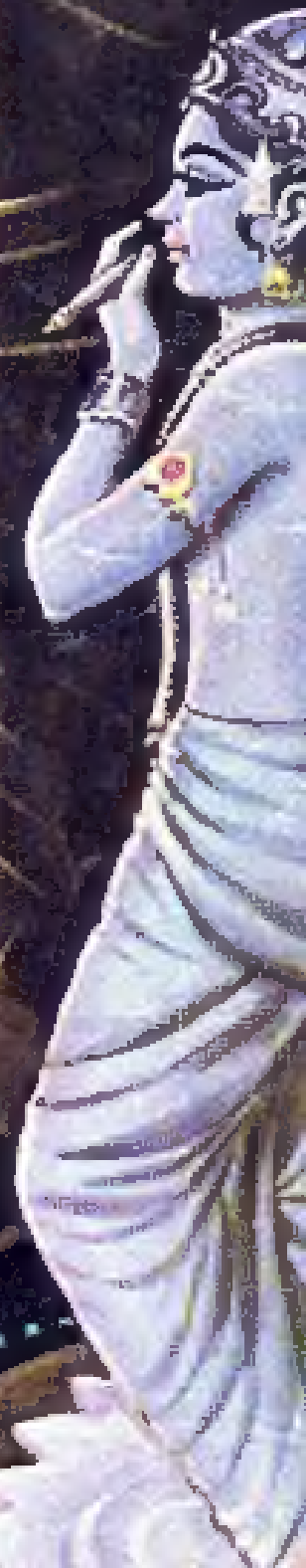


NARSINH MEHTA



APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE



AUTHORITY

"Vaishnava Jana to..." was Gandhiji's favourite bhajan. This verse along with thousands of songs, hymns and bhajans were composed by Narsinh Mehta, the poet of Gujarat. Narsinh was a great devotee of Lord Krishna, and he had complete faith in the Lord. From his early childhood, he had passed on the entire burden of his livelihood to the Lord. He himself was engrossed in composing and singing bhajans, leaving the strains and stresses of domestic life to his Lord.

Today untouchability is punishable under the law. Nevertheless, Harijans (people of the scheduled caste) do not feel secure and are victims of unabashed tyranny. Imagine the plight of these people more than five hundred years back, when a high-caste Hindu had to take a ritualistic bath if the mere shadow of a Harijan fell on him. Narsinh Mehta went to sing hymns in the Harijan locality and dared the wrath of the orthodox society. He was a social reformer with rare courage. The word "Harijan", which Mahatma Gandhi later used for referring to the people of the scheduled caste, was first coined by Narsinh. His aloofness from family life was proverbial. He sang bhajans even as his wife and son breathed their last.

Presented here is the pictorial saga of Narsinh's life, full of dramatic events and amazing anecdotes.

OUR NEXT TITLE :

JASMA
OF THE ODES



NARSINH MEHTA



NARSINH MEHTA WAS THE SON OF A NAGAR* BRAHMAN OF
TALAJA, A SMALL VILLAGE IN SAURASHTRA.

* A SECT OF BRAHMAN'S

NARSINH WAS BORN DUMB. HIS PARENTS DIED WHEN HE WAS FIVE AND HIS GRAND-MOTHER, JAY KUNVAR, TOOK CARE OF HIM.

WILL THIS BOY NEVER LEARN TO SPEAK?

BOYS OF HIS AGE WOULD TEASE HIM.

COME HERE, YOU DUMB FOOL

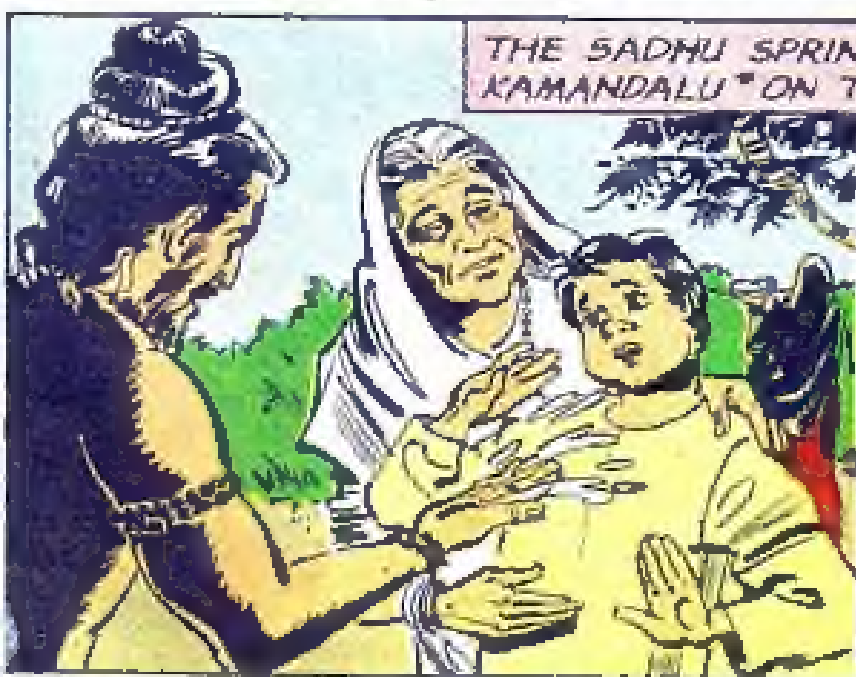
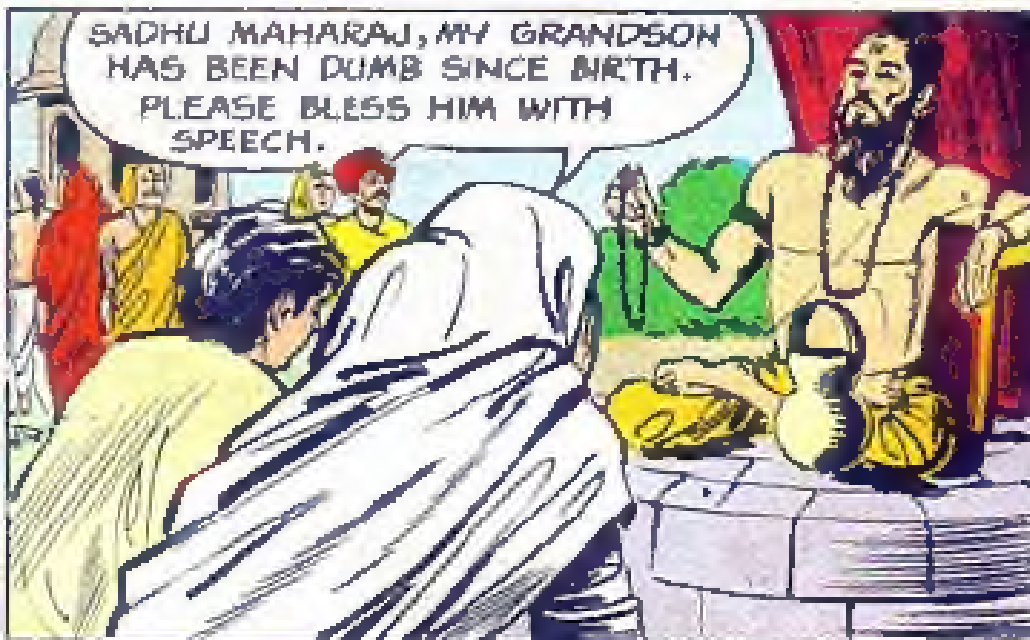


WHEN NARSINH WAS EIGHT, HIS GRANDMOTHER TOOK HIM TO THE LOCAL TEMPLE ON VASANT PANCHAMI* DAY. THERE—

O LORD, PLEASE GRANT MY GRANDSON THE GIFT OF SPEECH.



SHE CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE, THE COMPASSIONATE FACE OF A SADHU CAUGHT HER ATTENTION.



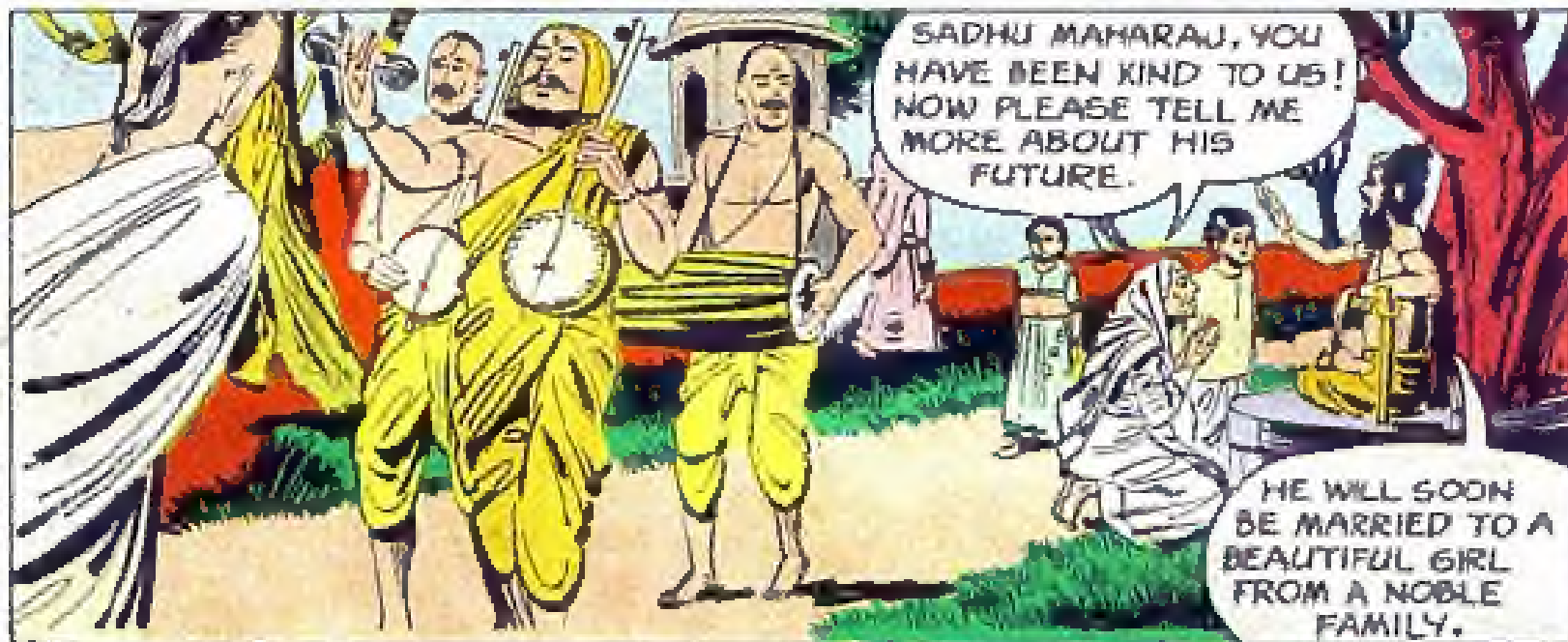
THE SADHU SPRINKLED A LITTLE WATER FROM HIS KAMANDALU* ON THE BOY AND WHISPERED IN HIS EAR.



THE OLD WOMAN LOOKED EXPECT-
ANTLY AT THE CHILD AND LO!

RADHE KRISHNA!
RADHE KRISHNA!

HE CAN SPEAK!
MY GRANDSON
CAN SPEAK!!



A YEAR LATER, HAPPY AT THE TRANSFORMATION IN YOUNG
NARSINH, JAY KUNVAR TOOK HIM TO JUNAGADH, WHERE
HIS COUSIN BANSIDHAR SERVED AS A HEAD-CONSTABLE.

NOW THAT THE
BOY CAN SPEAK,
YOU SHOULD
EDUCATE HIM.

I WILL,
GRANDMOTHER!



A FEW MONTHS LATER -

BANSI! NARSI! IS NEARLY TEN YEARS OLD. IT IS TIME YOU FOUND A SUITABLE BRIDE FOR HIM.



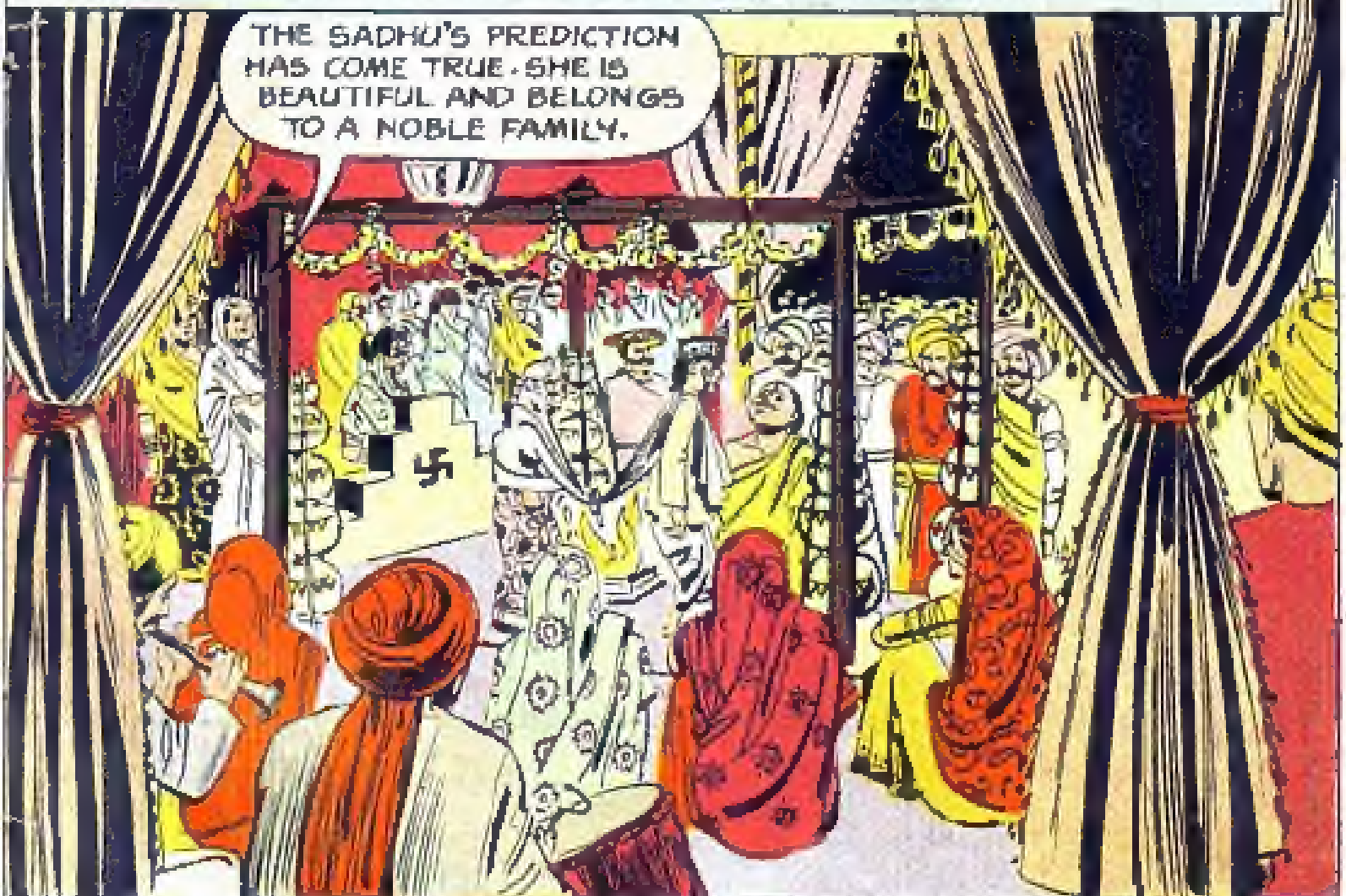
IT'S BEEN BAD ENOUGH HAVING TO FEED THE USE-LESS BOY. NOW THEY WANT TO ADD MORE MOUTHS TO FEED.

HOW CAN A FOOL LIKE HIM RUN A HOUSEHOLD?

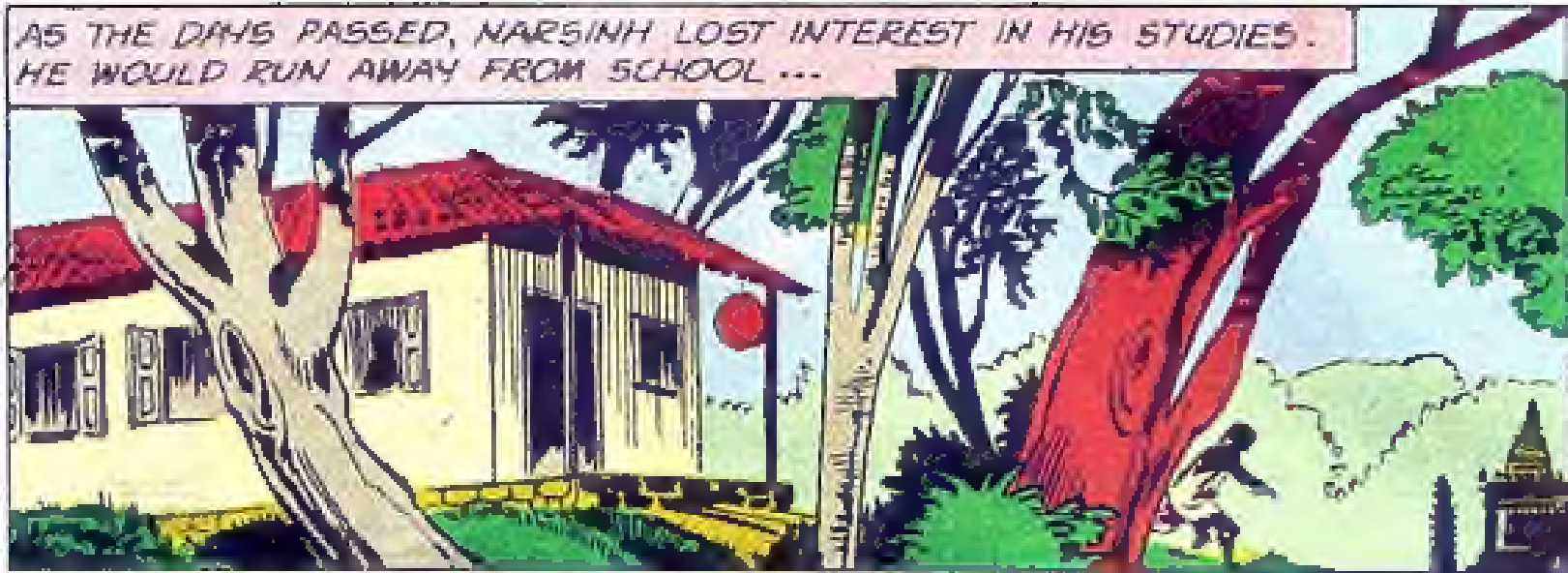


BUT JAY KUNVAR IGNORED HER AND PRODDED BANSI TILL HE FOUND A BRIDE, THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD MANERSAURI, FOR NARSINH.

THE SADHU'S PREDICTION HAS COME TRUE. SHE IS BEAUTIFUL AND BELONGS TO A NOBLE FAMILY.



AS THE DAYS PASSED, NARSINH LOST INTEREST IN HIS STUDIES. HE WOULD RUN AWAY FROM SCHOOL ...



... AND SPEND HIS TIME IN TEMPLES, LISTENING TO DEVOTIONAL SONGS AND KIRTANS*.



ONCE, WHEN HE RETURNED HOME AFTER STAYING AWAY FOR THREE DAYS—



*RELIGIOUS STORIES TOLD MOSTLY THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF SONGS

DURITGAURI THREW SOME ROTIS* AT HIM.

I SUPPOSE YOU'VE
COME HOME BECAUSE
YOU ARE HUNGRY.
HERE...EAT THIS.

MY POOR HUSBAND.
BUT WHAT CAN
I DO? I AM
HELPLESS.

WHEN NARSINH WAS FIFTEEN—

NARSINH IS SIMPLY
LOAFING ABOUT. WHY
DON'T YOU MAKE
HIM WORK?

LATER —

NARSI, YOU MUST
TRY TO BE USE-
FUL TO THE
FAMILY.

BROTHER,
I WILL DO
WHATEVER
YOU ASK
ME TO.

THEN TAKE THE
COWS OUT TO
GRAZE AND
RETURN
BEFORE
DUSK.

WHILE THE COWS GRAZED, NARSI WOULD BE LOST IN SINGING DEVOTIONAL SONGS.

RADHE KRISHNA!
RADHE KRISHNA!

WHEN MANEKGAURI GAVE BIRTH TO A DAUGHTER—

LET US NAME HER KUNVERBAI.

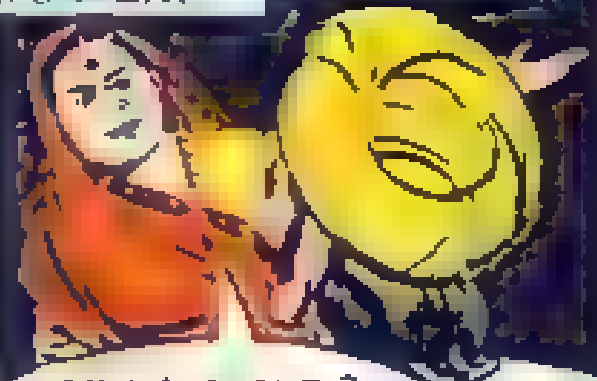
THE CHILDLESS DURITGAURI BECAME JEALOUS.

MANEK, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOURSELF TO BE? A QUEEN? EVER SINCE YOU HAD THE CHILD, YOU HAVE STOPPED WORKING. GO WASH THE CLOTHES.

TWO YEARS LATER, A SON WAS BORN TO MANEK.

WE'LL NAME HIM SHAMALDAS.

JATGAURI COULD NOT
BEAR MANEK'S GOOD
FORTUNE



AM I A SLAVE?
HOW LONG SHOULD
WE CARRY THE BURDEN
OF FEEDING THEIR
GROWING FAMILY?

AREN'T YOU ASHAMED
THAT YOUR HUSBAND IS
A LLALEK? HOW LONG
CAN WE CONTIN-
UE TO FEED
YOU?



THESE VESSELS
ARE NOT CLEAN
CAN'T YOU BE
A LITTLE
MORE CARE-
FUL?



OLD JAY KUNVAR WOULD CONSOLE
MANEK.

MANEK, YOU MUST
NOT MIND HER
WORDS. SHE IS
LIKE A MOTHER
TO YOU



ED BY

KUNVERBAI IS
GROWN UP WE MUST
FIND A GOOD
HUSBAND FOR
HER

ISN'T THAT
THE DUTY OF
HER STUPID
FATHER?

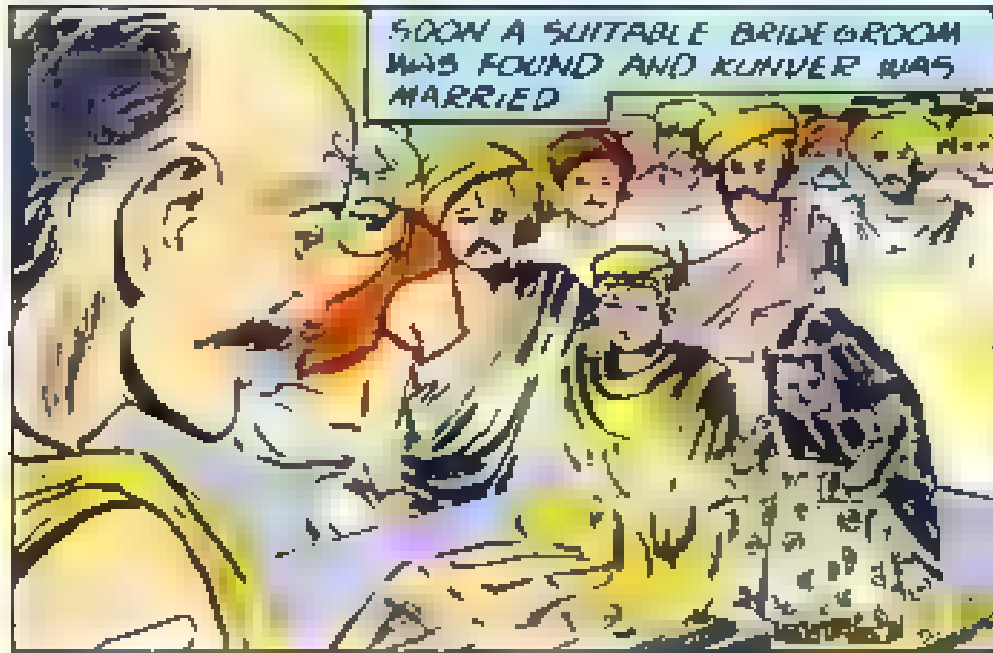


THE OLD WOMAN IGNORED HER AND TURNED TO BANSI.

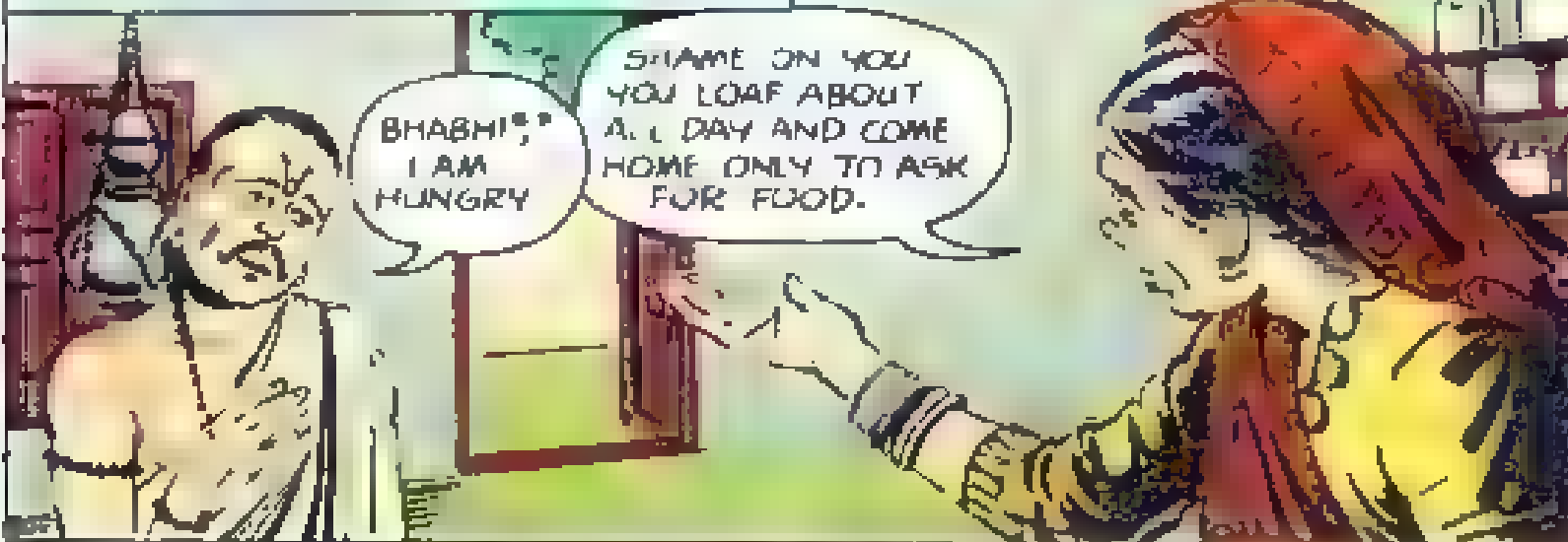
BANSI, YOU CAN'T LEAVE IT TO A BHAGAT LIKE NAKSI! PLEASE TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND DON'T WORRY. GET KUNVER MARRIED. WILL



SOON A SUITABLE BRIDE GROOM WAS FOUND AND KUNVER WAS MARRIED



JAY KUNWAR, NARSINH'S GRANDMOTHER, DIED SOON AFTER THE WEDDING. ONE EVENING —



BHABHI,* I AM HUNGRY

SHAME ON YOU YOU LOAF ABOUT ALL DAY AND COME HOME ONLY TO ASK FOR FOOD.

BUT BHABHI,* I HAVE BEEN WORKING I HAVE CUT ENOUGH GRASS TO FEED OUR HORSES AND COWS FOR THREE DAYS.



JURITA AURI THREW A STALE ROTI INTO NAKSI'S PLATE

THIS IS ALL YOU WILL GET





UNABLE TO BEAR SUCH JIBES, NARSINH LEFT THE HOUSE ..



AND WALKED AIMLESSLY FOR ABOUT 20 MILES THEN, TIRED, HE STRETCHED HIMSELF OUT BELOW A BANYAN TREE AS HE WONDERED WHAT TO DO HIS GAZE FELL UPON A TEMPLE IN THE DISTANCE



HE WALKED UP TO IT AND WENT IN
T WAS A SHIVA TEMPLE



A WEEK LATER, A SADHU STOOD BEFORE NARSINH



I AM PLEASED WITH YOU ASK FOR A BOON!

NOW FORTUNATE I AM GIVE ME THAT WHICH YOU PRIZE MOST



THE SADHU TOOK NARSINH TO LORD KRISHNA'S TEMPLE IN DWARAKA. THERE -



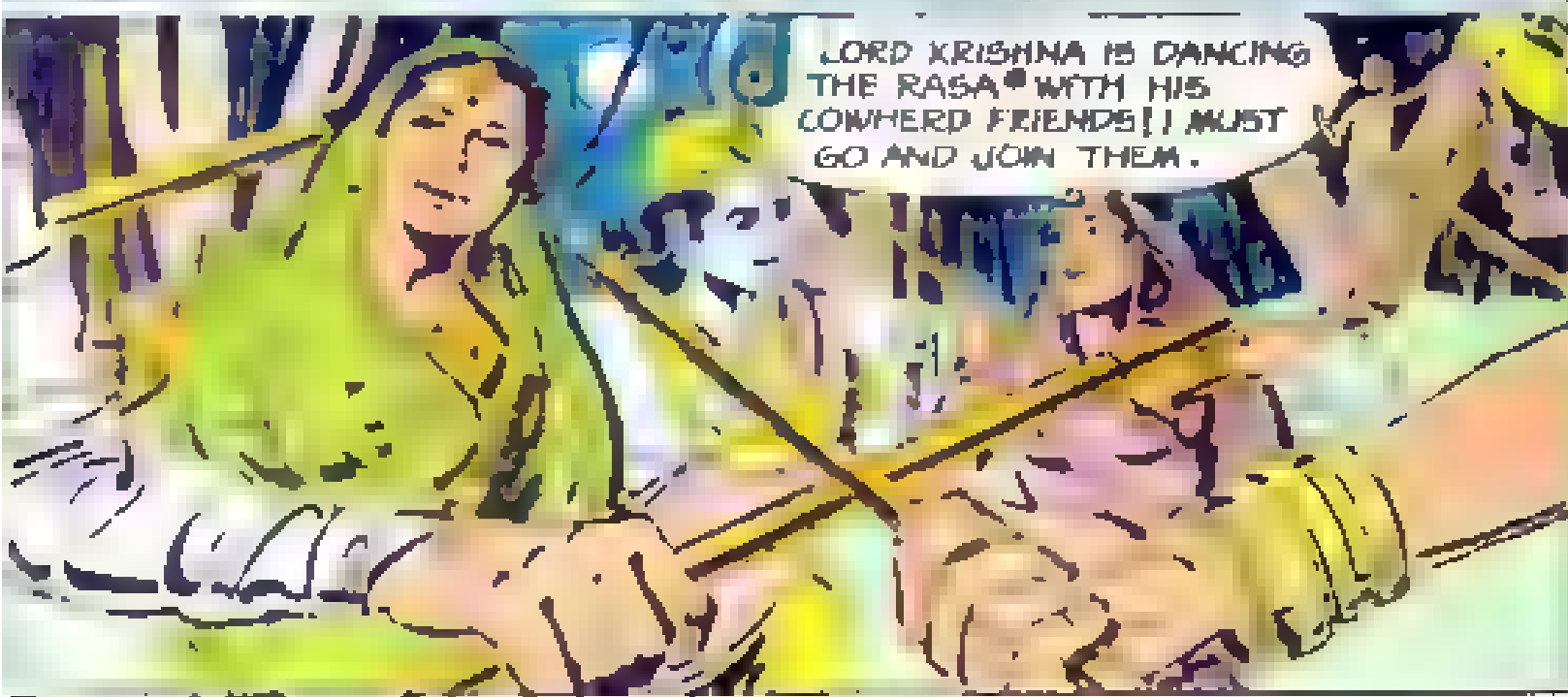
WHAT I VALUE MOST IS A VISION OF LORD KRISHNA. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HIM?

NARSINH, I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

YOU COULD NOT HAVE OFFERED ME A MORE PRECIOUS BOON, MY LORD!

NOTHING, MY LORD

...AND WITH HIS FRIENDS HE WAS DANCING IN THE
 ...AND STAYED IN A ... IN THE NIGHT OF ...



JUST THEN -

O NARSINH!
YOUR HAND
IS BURNING!

KRISHNA TOUCHED THE BURNT
HAND AND LO! NOT EVEN A
SCAR WAS VISIBLE.

HERE, TAKE THESE KARATALS*
AND GO HOME. WHENEVER
YOU NEED MY HELP, SING
THE KEDAR RAGA** AND
I WILL BE THERE

WHEN NARSINH RETURNED HOME -

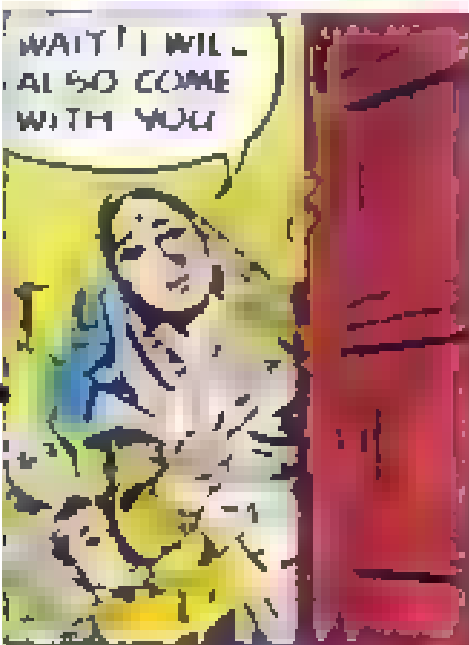
WHERE HAVE
YOU BEEN ALL
THESE DAYS?

I WAS
WITH THE
LORD!

AND NARSINH TOLD HIM ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES AT DWAKAKA

THEY PERFORM
RASA AT DWAKAKA
ON EVERY FULL
MOON NIGHT. THE
FOOL THINKS THAT
THE MAN WHO
TOK THE PART
OF KRISHNA WAS
THE LORD HIMSELF

BELIEVE ME,
I SAW AND
TALKED TO
LORD KRISH-
NA IN DWAKA-
KA





SATYU'S FLOCKED TO MATHUR'S TEMPLE HE FEED ALL THAT CAME...



AND THE MONEY WAS SOON SPENT

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT WE HAVE TO GIVE ORNAMENTS AND CLOTHES TO HER? THERE IS NO MONEY LEFT IN THE HOUSE.

LORD KRISHNA WILL ARRANGE FOR EVERYTHING. LET THE PRIEST WAIT.

THE PRIEST WAITED FOR THREE DAYS. THEN -

WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS. HOW LONG CAN I WAIT HERE? I AM LEAVING TOMORROW.

THAT EVENING, NARSINH PRAYED FERVENTLY TO LORD KRISHNA.



THE AMUSED PRIEST CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE.

DOES HE REALLY BELIEVE LORD KRISHNA WILL COME AND GIVE HIM MONEY?



VICTORY TO LORD KRISHNA!

• 4 • HE WANTS TO GIVE MARRIAGE. THE BRIDE WOULD STAY ON IN HER PARENTS' HOME TILL SHE ATTAINED MATURITY



THE BRAHMAN, HOWEVER, DID NOT LIKE ANY OF THE BOYS SHOWN TO HIM.



THE NAGARS WERE BY NOW
ANNOYED WITH THE VISITOR



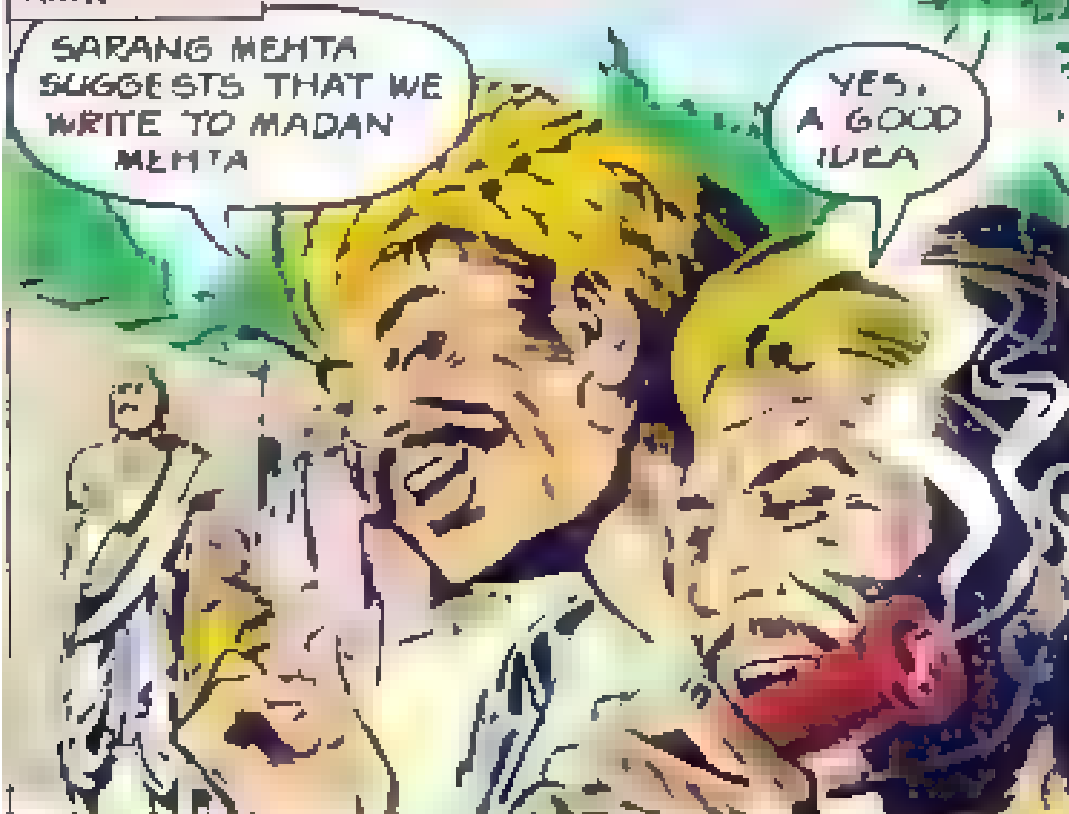
THE NEXT DAY - WHO TOLD YOU
THAT I AM RICH?
I AM VERY POOR.
AND ILLITERATE
TOO.



MONTHS PASSED AFTER THE PROPOSAL WAS ACCEPTED BUT NARSHI MADE NO MOVE TO GET HIS SON MARRIED. THE JEALOUS NAGARS CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM.

SARANG MEHTA SUGGESTS THAT WE WRITE TO MADAN MEHTA

YES, A GOOD IDEA



WHEN MADAN MEHTA RECEIVED THE LETTER -

THEY WRITE THAT MY DAUGHTER HAS BEEN ENGAGED TO THE SON OF A PAUPER. HE IS TOO POOR TO AFFORD EVEN THE EXPENSES OF A WEDDING.



A LITTLE LATER

HERE, GIVE THIS LETTER TO NARSHINH MEHTA



AT JUNAGADH

WHAT DOES MEHTAJI SAY?

HE SAYS, IF WE DELAY THE WEDDING ANY LONGER, HE MAY HAVE TO BREAK OFF THE ENGAGEMENT





ON AN AUFFICIAL DAY, THE BRIGADION'S PARTY LEFT UMADAH



BUT BEFORE THE BRIGADION REACHED THE OUT-
 REACH OF UMADAH THE MEN'S HOUSES,
 HALL IS AND APPROXIMATED MEN JOINED IT
 IN LARGE NUMBERS I WAS LET BY A MCKHANT
 ON HORSEBACK



WHEN IT REACHED
VADNAGAR -

WELCOME,
MANTHAN
WELCOME ME
FOR MY
WEDDING LETTER

AM NOT NARSINH
I AM BUT A SER-
VANT OF HIS.

A LITTLE LATER, NARSINH
REACHED THE SCENE

WELCOME, SIR.

SHARAD'S WEDDING TOOK PLACE WITH GREAT RUMP AND CELEBRATION

NOW I KNOW! IT WAS LORD
KRISHNA, IN THE GUISE OF A
MERCHANT, WHO LED THE
PROCESSION.

NARSINH'S TALKING, HOWEVER,
WAS NOT LATE ME, BUT HIS
SIN SINCE I WAS LATE, HIS
WIFE, TIA, TELL ME

I AM NOT FEELING
WELL. CAN'T YOU
STAY AT HOME?

I HAVE BEEN INVITED
TO THE SCAVENGEES
CAUSE THEY WILL BE DIS-
APPOINTED, I CAN'T GO

NARSINH TAKES THE WEDDING
WAGON WITH HIM AND GOES
TO THE SCAVENGEES

WHEN HE RETURNED HOME -

ALAS! I AM
TOO LATE



BUT HE SOON RECOVERED
FROM THE SHOCK.

THERE IS NONE
ONE CAN CALL
ONE'S OWN,
EXCEPT LORD
KRISHNA.



NARSINH'S VISIT TO THE 'SCAVENGERS'
COLONY CREATED A FURORE

HOW COULD
NARSINH DO
SUCH A
THING?

WE MUST
EX-COMMUNICATE
HIM



A FEW DAYS LATER, THERE WAS
A COMMUNITY DINNER AT A
BRAHMAN'S HOUSE.

WILL COME, IF
YOU HAVE NOT
INVITED NARSINH

OF COURSE,
I HAVEN'T HE
IS AN OUT-
CASTE



BUT AT THE DINNER

OH! HOW DID THIS
SCAVENGER GET
HERE?

HERE IS
NARSINH

THERE'S ONE NEXT
TO ME TOO.



AFRAID OF BEING POLLUTED,
THE NAGARS RAN OUT.



WE ARE
REAPING THE
FRUITS OF OUR
ACTION AGAINST
NARSINH.

THEY WENT TO NARSINH -



FORGIVE US!
WE ARE SORRY
WE EX-COMMUNICA
TED YOU

A YEAR AFTER MANJA'S DEATH



TOMORROW IS YOUR
WIFE'S DEATH ANNIVER-
SARY. YOU MUST FEED
THE COMMUNITY AS IS
THE CUSTOM.

CAN'T
AFFORD IT

IF YOU DON'T,
HER SOUL WILL
NOT KNOW
PEACE



BUT
BUT...

AT THAT MOMENT A PARTY OF PLEBINS, SINGING
OF KRISHNA, REACHED KINABATH



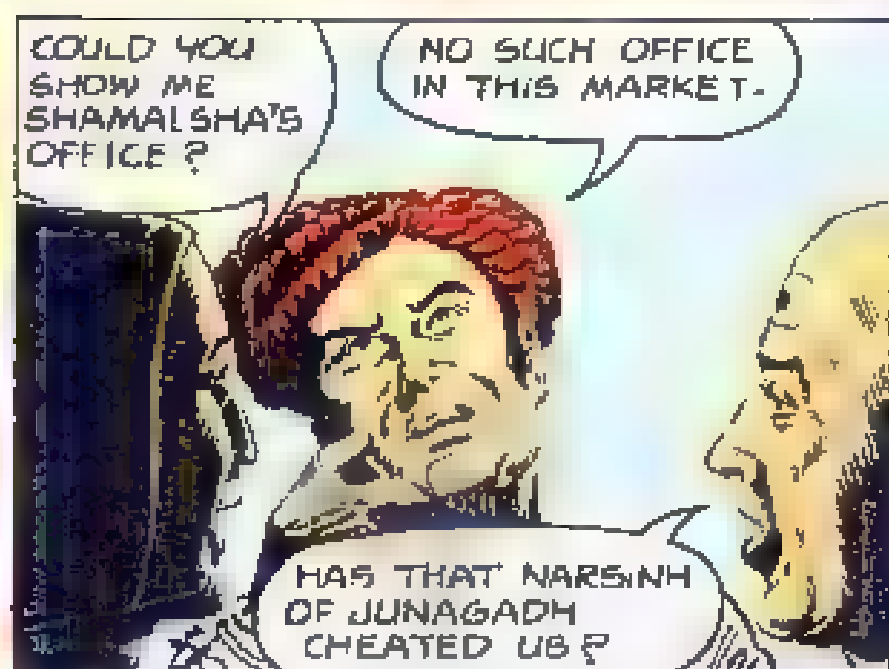
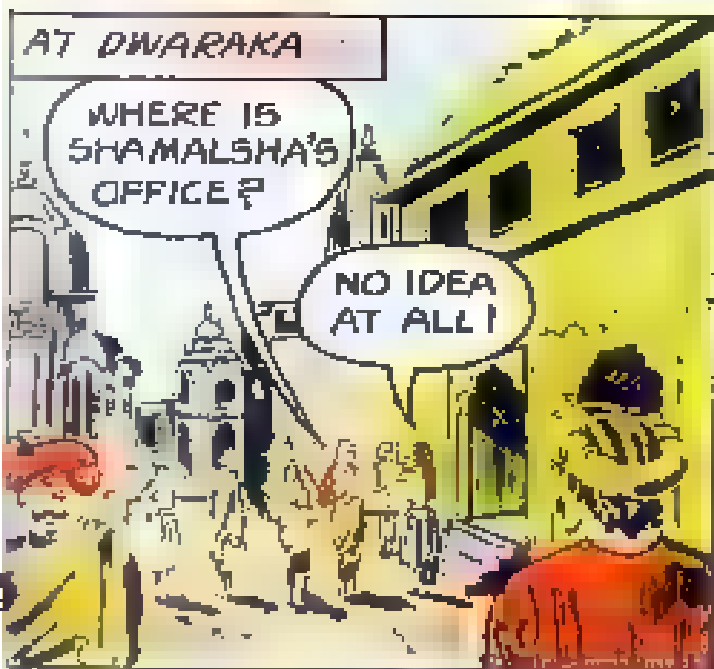
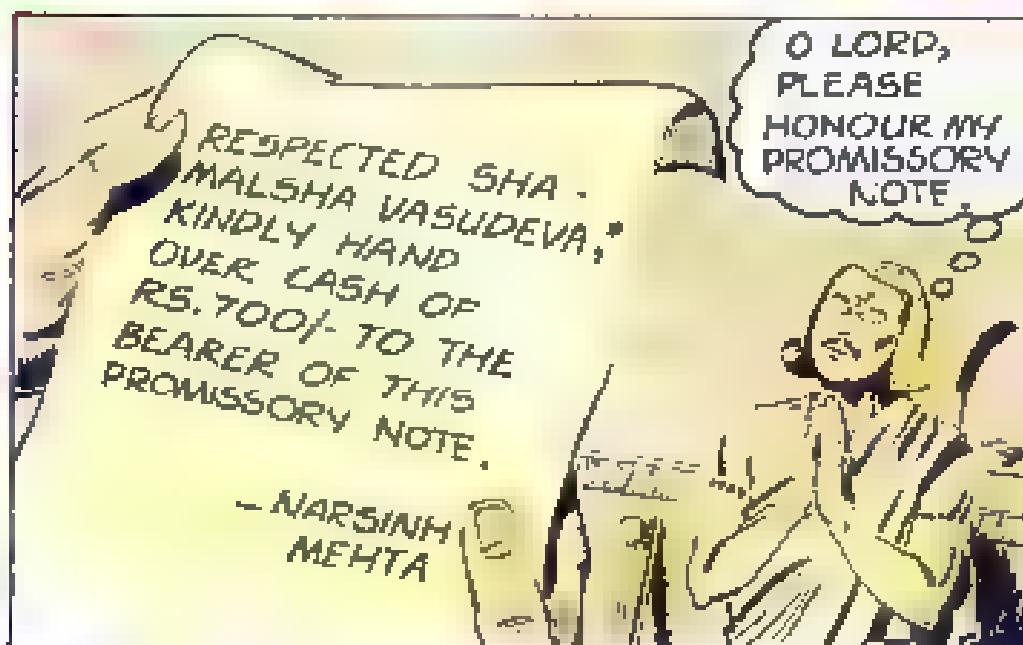
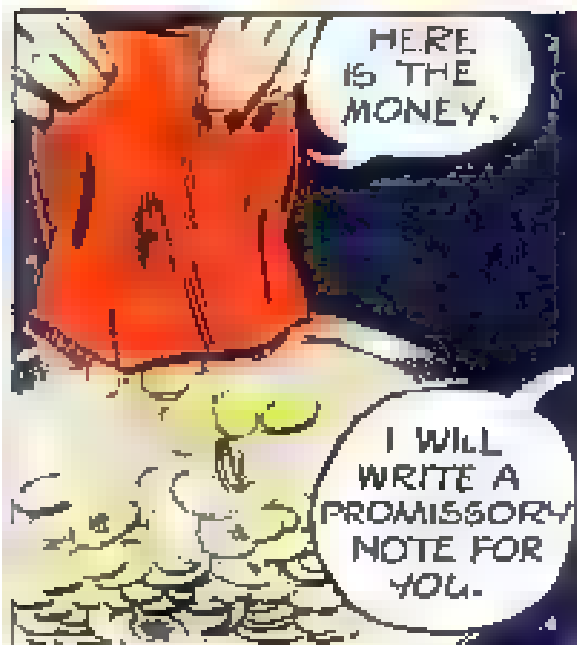
WE ARE ON OUR
WAY TO DWARAKA.
WHO WILL TAKE OUR
CASH AND GIVE US
A PROMISSORY
NOTE?

GO TO NARSINH.
HE IS A RICH MAN
AND HAS BUSINESS
CONNECTIONS IN
DWARAKA TOO.

AT NARSINH'S HOME -

WILL YOU ACCEPT RS 700/-
AND GIVE US A PROMISSORY
NOTE WHICH I CAN ENCASH
AT DWARAKA?

LORD KRISHNA
MUST HAVE SENT
THE MONEY FOR
TOMORROW'S
EXPENSES.



* LORD KRISHNA.



NARSINH ARRIVED AT LINA IN A CART DRAWN BY FAMISHED BULLOCKS.
A FEW SADHUS WERE WITH HIM.

WELCOME,
FATHER.
WHO ARE
THESE
PEOPLE?

HARIJANS, THE PEOPLE OF
LORD KRISHNA. NO ONE
ELSE WAS PREPARED TO
COME WITH ME.

WHAT HAVE YOU
BROUGHT FOR MY
IN-LAWS?

NOTHING.

DON'T YOU KNOW IT
IS CUSTOMARY ON AN
OCCASION LIKE THIS
TO GIVE AWAY GIFTS
TO THE IN-LAWS?
I FEEL MISERABLE.

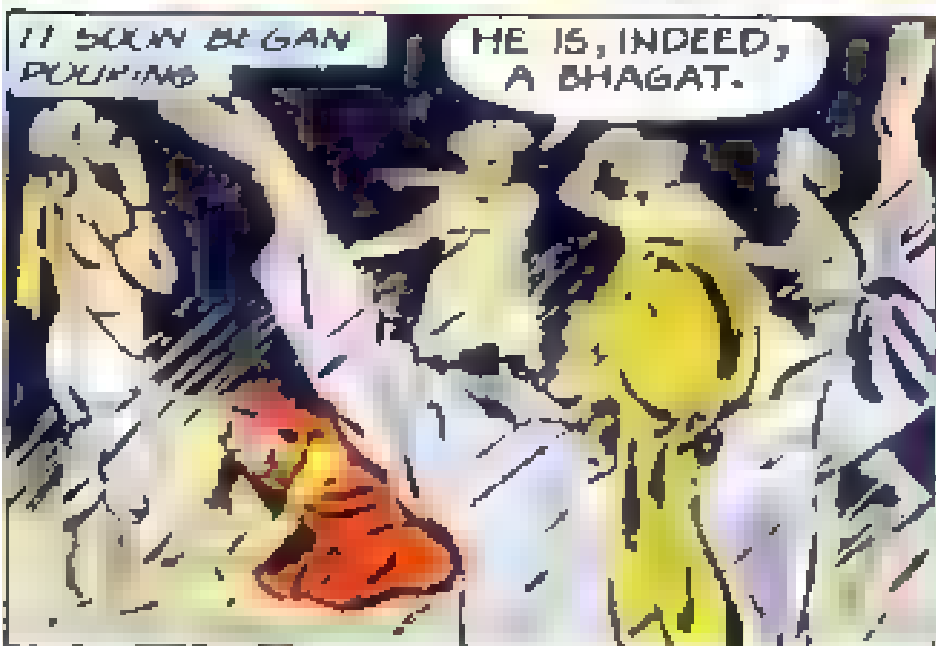
DON'T
WORRY,
MY CHILD.

NARSINH AND HIS PARTY WERE
GIVEN ROOMS TO STAY. THERE
TOO THEY STARTED SINGING
BHAJANS.

RADHE KRISHNA!

THE NEXT MORNING -
HERE! HOT WATER
FOR YOUR BATH.

IT IS TOO HOT
PLEASE GIVE
ME SOME
COLD
WATER



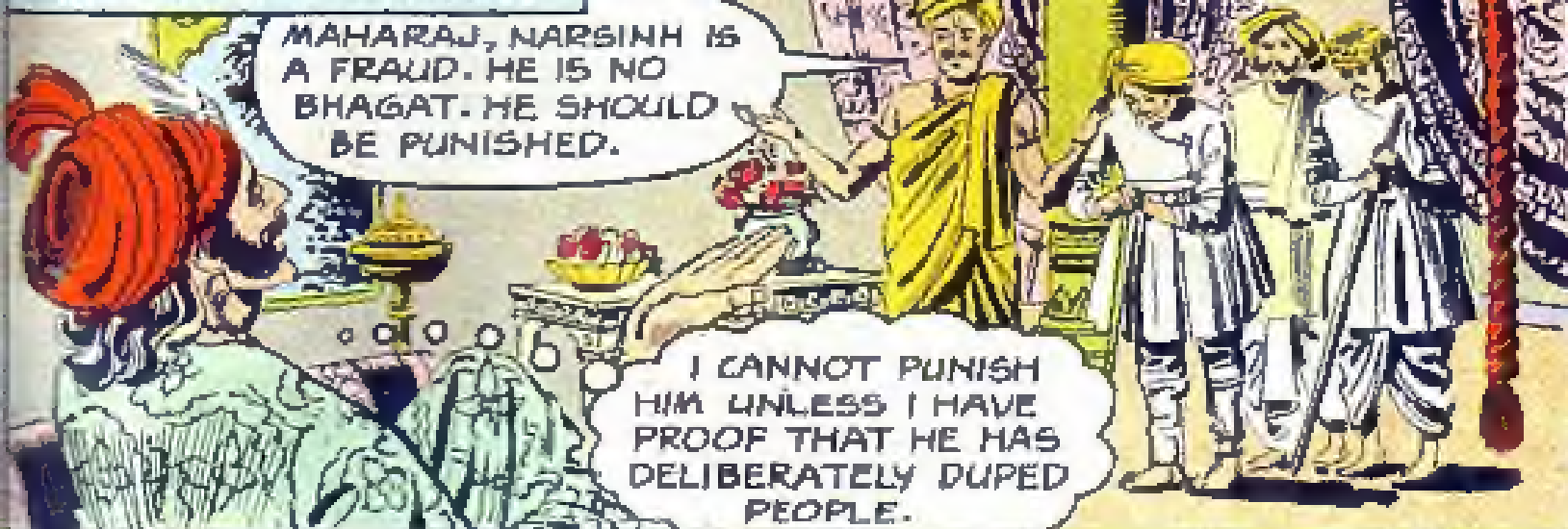
MEANWHILE AT JUNAGADH, SARANG MEHTA
EVEN SCHEMING AGAINST NARSINH.



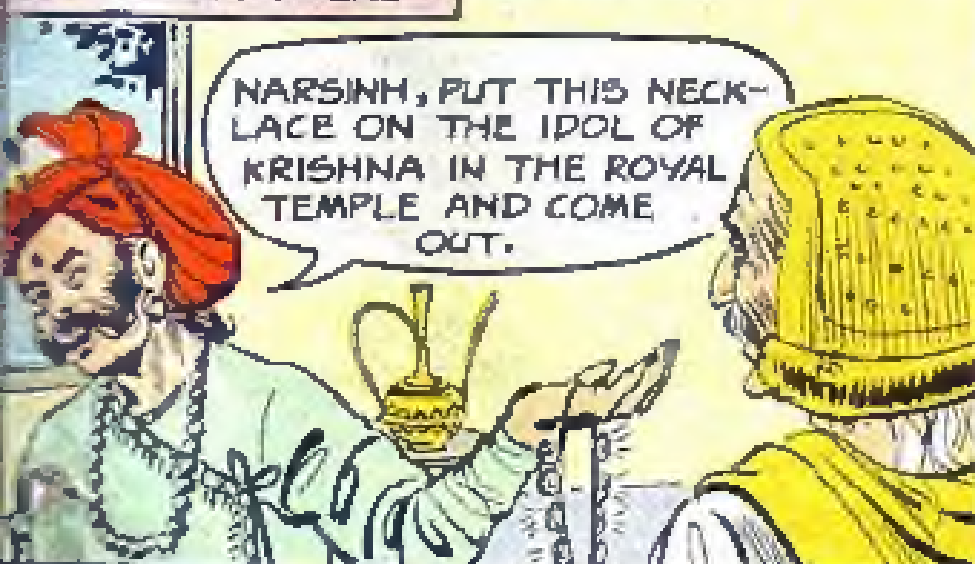
NARSINH HAS
BORROWED SOME
MONEY FROM
DHARNIDHAR AND
HAS PROMISED
NOT TO SING IN
THE RAGA TILL
HE REPAYS IT.



SARANG COMPLAINED TO RA*MANDLIK,
THE KING OF JUNAGADH.



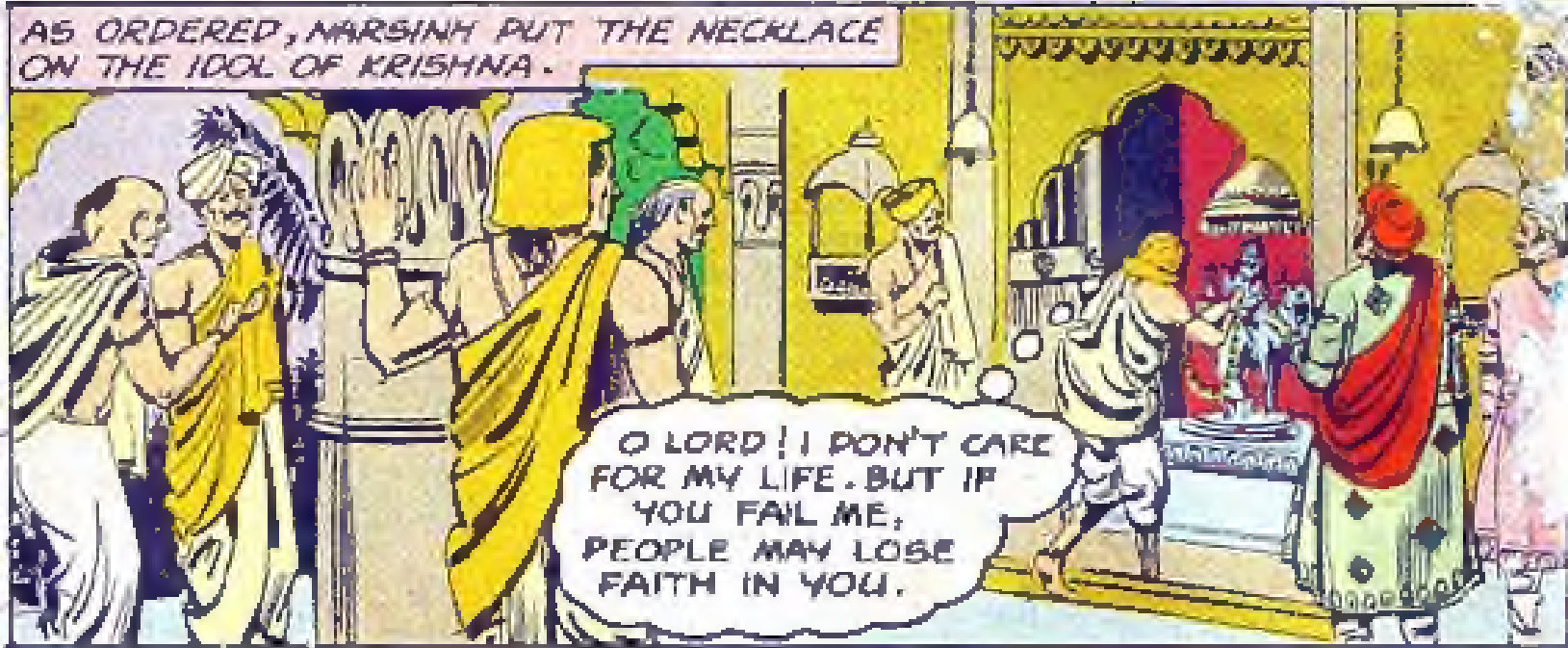
HE DECIDED TO TEST NARSINH'S
SPIRITUAL POWERS.



IF LORD KRISHNA
PUTS THIS NECK-
LACE AROUND YOUR
NECK, WE WILL
ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR
GREATNESS; OTHER-
WISE YOU DIE.



AS ORDERED, NARSINH PUT THE NECKLACE ON THE IDOL OF KRISHNA.



WHEN NARSI CAME OUT, THE KING LOCKED THE TEMPLE AND KEPT THE KEY WITH HIM.



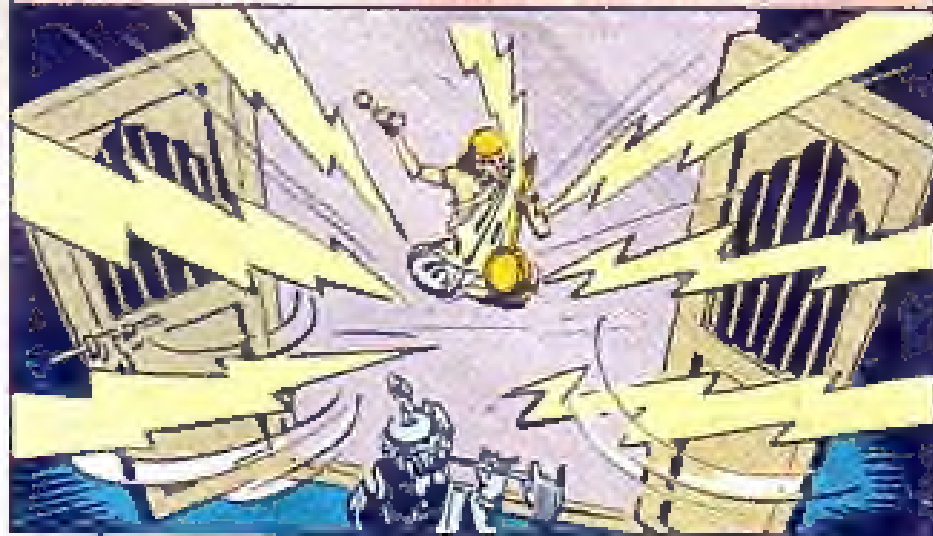
MEANWHILE AT DHARNIDHAR MEHTA'S HOUSE -



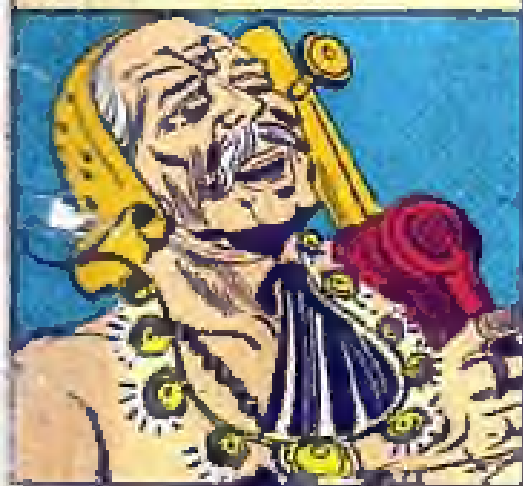
THE RECEIPT FELL INTO THE LAP OF NARSINH, WHO WAS SITTING BESIDE THE TEMPLE.

LORD KRISHNA MUST HAVE REPAID THE MONEY. I AM NOW FREE TO SING HIS RAGA.

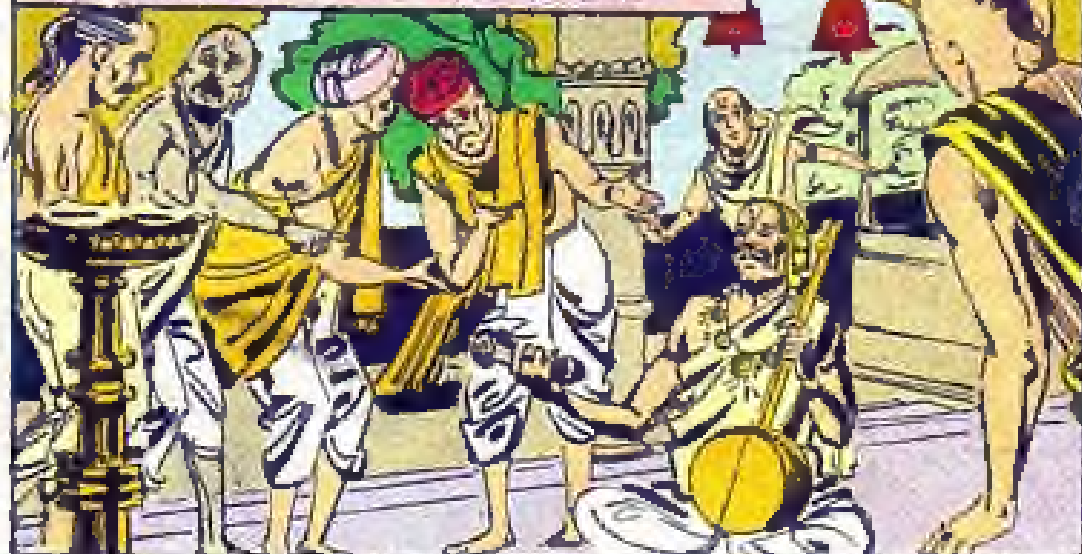
NARSINH BEGAN SINGING IN ECSTASY AND LO! THE DOOR OF THE TEMPLE OPENED. THERE WAS A FLASH OF LIGHT ...



AND THE NEXT MOMENT, THE NECKLACE WAS AROUND THE NECK OF NARSINH.



THE PEOPLE WERE STUNNED AND STOOD ROOTED TO THE SPOT.



THEN THEY VIED WITH ONE ANOTHER TO BE THE FIRST TO FALL AT THE FEET OF NARSINH. AMONG THEM WAS SARANG MEHTA TOO.



FROM THEN ON, NARSINH WAS REVERED BY ONE AND ALL. HE LIVED TO A RIPE OLD AGE, PROPAGATING HIS GOSPEL OF LOVE AND BROTHERHOOD.

BEWARE

scan OR BE scanned !



MEEWOW